

## Message Text

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ACTION AF-04

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FM AMEMBASSY MONROVIA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6282

C O N F I D E N T I A L MONROVIA 3881

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1

TAGS: EAID, PFOR, LI,US

SUBJECT: FOREIGN MINISTER DENNIS'S REMARKS AT FOURTH OF JULY  
RECEPTION

REF: MONROVIA 0966

1. FOREIGN MINISTER DENNIS'S TOAST TO PRESIDENT, GOVERNMENT  
AND PEOPLE OF US AT FOURTH OF JULY RECEPTION SHOCKED THOSE  
PRESENT WITH GRACELESS AND INSIDIOUS COMMENTS ABOUT US AND  
ITS MOTIVATIONS, PAST AND PRESENT, IN RELATIONS TO LIBERIA.

2. IN RAMBLING DISCOURSE, AFTER CONVEYING USUAL FELICITATIONS,  
DENNIS RECALLED DECLARATION'S STATEMENT THAT  
"ALL MEN ARE BORN FREE AND EQUAL (OR WORDS TO THAT EFFECT),"  
AND WOUND UP, IN VEILED REFERENCE TO RACISM, DOUBTING THAT US  
LIVED UP TO THOSE WORDS. HE SAID HE USED TO BELIEVE THAT IT  
WAS AMERICAN PHILANTHROPY THAT STARTED LIBERIA BUT IS NOW NOT SURE,  
IMPLYING MEANER MOTIVES. ECHOING PRESIDENT TOLBERT'S  
SHIBBOLETHS ON "THE FAMILY OF MAN" IN "OUR ONE WORLD," DENNIS NOTED  
THAT TRUE MEMBERS OF A FAMILY HELP THEIR BROTHERS AND SONS,  
AND THEN CAST DOUBT ON THE US'S MEMBERSHIP IN THE FAMILY OF MAN IN VIEW

OF ITS FAILURE ADEQUATELY TO (LIVE UP TO US-LIBERIAN SPECIAL  
RELATIONSHIP AND) ASSIST LIBERIA. HE PLAINLY IMPLIED THAT HE  
THINKS US ALREADY GETS MORE CREDIT THAN DESERVED FOR ASSITANCE  
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ALREADY RENDERED.

3. ALL AMERICANS PRESENT WERE STUNNED; SOME BELIEVE THE FOREIGN MINISTER WAS EITHER DRUNK OR ON THE WAY. MEMBERS OF DIPLOMATIC CORPS WERE EQUALLY NONPLUSSED, AND FILED OUT IMMEDIATELY AFTER AMBASSADOR'S RESPONSE.

4. AMBASSADOR'S RESPONSE NOTED THAT (A) WE DO NOT READ HISTORY THE SAME WAY--WE ARE PROUD OF US EARLY ROLE IN LIBERIA AND ALSO PROUD OF THE CONTRIBUTIONS OTHER NATIONS, INCLUDING LIBERIA, HAD MADE TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF OUR INSTITUTIONS AND MULTIRACIAL SOCIETY; (B) US HAS NEVER CONSIDERED THAT ITS MISSION IN THE WORLD IS TO FULFILL ALL REQUIREMENTS OF ANY NATION, BUT TO THE EXTENT THAT A NATION HELPS ITSELF IT COULD COUNT ON A SYMPATHETIC RESPONSE TO ITS DEVELOPMENT PROBLEMS ON THE PART OF THE US; (C) IF DENNIS FELT LIBERIA HAD BEEN SHORT-CHANGED IN ITS RELATIONS WITH THE US, THEN WE HAD BETTER TALK.

5. AFTERWARD, IN REPLY TO AMBASSADOR'S ASKING WHAT CAUSED SUCH OUT-OF-PLACE REMARKS, DENNIS SAID ONLY THAT HE HAD SPOKEN "FROM THE HEART." FORMER ASSISTANT MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS, NOW DEPUTY MINISTER OF FINANCE, GERALD PADMORE, LATER OPINED THAT PART OF DENNIS'S ANTI US TRACES TO HIS FRUSTRATION AT NEVER HAVING HAD A PRIVATE MEETING WITH SECRETARY.

6. IMMEDIATELY AFTER DENNIS'S DEPARTURE FROM RECEPTION AMBASSADOR REQUESTED MEETING WITH DENNIS. FIRST MEETING (REPORTED SEPARATELY) HELD EVENING JULY 4 AND ANOTHER SCHEDULED, SUBJECT TO CONFIRMATION BY DENNIS, FOR JULY 9.

7. DENNIS'S REMARKS REFLECT WHAT-HAVE-YOU-DONE-FOR-US-LATELY THEME HE HAS HARPED ON REPEATEDLY BEFORE (SEE MONROVIA 0966). DIFFERENCES ARE IN TONE (HIGHER LEVEL OF VITRIOL) AND FACT THAT HE MADE REMARKS NOT ONLY IN PUBLIC BUT AT TOTALLY INAPPROPRIATE OCCASION OF US NATIONAL DAY CELEBRATION.  
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